

Record gas prices are straining the pocketbooks of millions of hardworking American families and small businesses when they fill up at the pump. On average, drivers in Southern California are having to pay \$500 more than they did last year just to keep fuel in the tank. Congress must act to bring down gas prices and it must act now.

Unfortunately, long-term investments in alternative energies are still years from coming on line. In order to deliver immediate relief at the pump, the quickest, most reliable solution is to reduce our dependence on foreign oil by encouraging the production of more energy here at home.

So what exactly is stopping us from producing more American-made energy? The simple answer is that our energy infrastructure is plagued by unnecessary restrictions on drilling and an insufficient refining capacity.

Before reaching consumers, crude oil must be refined into gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel. Some refineries have increased their capacity over the years, yet the fact remains that no new refinery has been constructed in the United States since 1976.

As a result, total capacity at operating refineries is roughly 17 million barrels per day, while our total demand averages nearly 21 million barrels per day. This means that we must import 4 million barrels of refined oil from other sources.

To help close this gap I have cosponsored legislation that would open new American oil refineries; invest in clean energy sources such as wind, nuclear, and natural gas; and allow energy exploration in Outer Continental Shelf and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The simple reality is that America has vast unexplored domestic energy sources that can be brought to market in an environmentally friendly manner. With twenty-first century technologies and the strictest environmental standards in the world, America can produce and refine more of our own energy right here at home and protect our environment at the same time.

By increasing domestic supplies of energy and increasing refining capacity, we can help drive down the cost of gas, reduce our dependence on foreign sources of oil, and create more American jobs. With the price of gas rapidly approaching five dollars per gallon and showing no signs of stopping, hard-working California families simply cannot wait any longer.

GARY G. MILLER  
Member of Congress